

## 10 Sep 02 Employee Information Exchange – Understanding Your Future

### 10 Sep - 0900 Session:

Q1 If the OF 612 is used to update the Office Personnel File (OPF), can it be forwarded to employees via Email?

**Answer:** Yes, an electronic version will be forwarded to employees via email. The OF 612 is also available on the network under Formflow. After updating the OF-612, the employee gives the completed hard copy of the OF-612 to CPAC who then inserts into their OPF file.

Q2 Can DCS be provided more resources for employment assistance, e.g. resume assistance?

**Answer:** Funding has been requested from MEDCOM to hire additional contract employment assistance counselors for FY03.

Q3. Are NAF employees considered to be in the same Competitive Area (and therefore potentially impacted directly in the upcoming USAG RIF) similar to the impact of the RIF on Appropriated Fund employees in the USAG.

**Answer.** No, NAF employees would not compete with Appropriated Fund employees in a Reduction in Force; NAF employees cannot be bumped or displaced by Appropriated Fund employees.

Q4. Can an employee be placed in a higher grade during the RIF?

**Answer:** No, employees are placed at equal or lower grades.

Q5. During the RIF, who determines if an employee is qualified for a particular position? Do supervisors have any authority in placing an individual into a position in a RIF situation?

**Answer:** A RIF Team from Civilian Personnel Operations Center (CPOC - Aberdeen) will make all qualification determinations. IF there is a question pertaining to a particular employee's qualification, CPOC may consult with management or the supervisor but management will not have the final decision..

Q6. When registering under the Priority Placement Program (PPP), can you limit your area for job referrals to Fort Detrick?

**Answer:** Employees facing separation are registered for the minimum number of activities nearest their duty station likely to provide a reasonable opportunity for placement. They may not skip over DoD activities or states to register for more distant

locations. Activities in an adjoining zone that are no more distant from the employee's duty station than the furthestmost activity selected in the zone may be included in the initial area of referral. Employees who are scheduled for RIF CLG or who have declined a RIF CLG and are facing separation are restricted to DoD activities within their commuting area. Expansion beyond these limits requires CARE Program Coordinator approval.

Q7. Under Tuition Assistance, can the employee pay out of pocket and then obtain approval and reimbursement at a later date?

**Answer:** No, an employee cannot pay out of pocket and then obtain approval and reimbursement at a later date. In accordance with AR 690-400, the Installation Training Coordinator is the approving official for civilian training. Employees and supervisors shouldn't confuse that if their supervisor says ok, that this is approval to enroll or attend training. All training must be approved (by the Installation Training Coordinator) prior to enrollment or actually beginning a course. IAW:

C 2, AR 690-400

410

Chapter 410

Subchapter 5. Training Through Non-Government Facilities

5-1. INTRODUCTION

*a. General.*

(1) Delegation of authority in DA for approving training in non-Government facilities is covered in paragraph 3-6e. No employee will be assigned to training or permitted to enroll in a course in a non-Government training facility, regardless of course length, before the proper official grants approval. Requests for approvals after employees have en-rolled or actually begun the training must be disapproved. Employees who enroll in a non-Government training course without written prior approval are personally responsible for the total training cost.

Q8. Can Term employees be placed under PPP?

**Answer:** No. Registration Eligibility in PPP (Program A) requires current employees be on an appointment without time limitation.

Q9. Are student hires automatically separated during the RIF?

**Answer:** No. Management has the option as to whether they will retain or release temporary employees while the agency is undergoing a RIF. Temporary employees must be released before a competitive employee is released from the same competitive level. This does not mean that all temporary employees in all competitive levels must be terminated. Agencies often terminate temporaries prior to a RIF as a cost-savings measure and as a show of good faith to permanent employees that management is doing everything possible to avoid a RIF. The decision to terminate temporary employees should be based upon the circumstances of the RIF and the needs of the organization and not just a reflex reaction to having a RIF.

Q10. Do terms get severance pay?

**Answer:** A payment made to eligible separating employees, including term employees. The amount is determined by a formula that considers years of creditable civilian service, basic pay at the time of eligibility and an adjustment for employees over age 40.

You may be entitled to severance pay if your separation is involuntary and, if on the date of separation, you have been employed by the Federal government for at least the preceding 12 months. This may include non-temporary and temporary employment provided there was no break in service of more than three calendar days between appointments. "Reduction-in-Force" and "Resignation-RIF" actions are considered to be involuntary separations only when you have received a written notice of RIF separation. There are other circumstances that provide severance pay eligibility; contact the CPAC office for particular questions.

#### **10 Sep - 1300 Session:**

Q11. For employees who had changes/corrections to their "Employee Service Records", when will CPAC confirm that the changes were made to the record?

**Answer:** The Employee Master Records (EMRs) with employee-annotated corrections have been sent to the NECPOC for input of changes. The NECPOC is currently working this tasker, along with their other CA related priorities.

Q12. If an employee is 49 years of age and 30 years of service:

If separated due to RIF, can the employee wait one or two years and then retire?. if so, does the 2% annual penalty apply?

**Answer:** As this employee has enough years of service for retirement (Early), which is 25 years and any age, he can elect to either: (a) take an early retirement; if so and if under CSRS, there would be a 2% penalty for each year under 55 years of age, OR (b) opt to request a deferred annuity at the age of 62 and there would be no penalty attached at that point.

If separated due to RIF, can the employee wait six years and obtain a full retirement at age 55?

**Answer:** No, the only timeframe that can be later used if one elects to not take the EARLY retirement at the time of separation is the DEFERRED RETIREMENT and that can only be taken when the individual reaches age 62. Also, as a reminder, if one is eligible for ANY type of retirement at the separation date, they cannot receive severance pay.

Q13. If I accept a job under PPP, do I get pay retention?

**Answer:** An employee who is on PPP, and accepts a position that is of a lower grade level than their current grade level, may be eligible for grade retention. During the 2-year period of grade retention, employees maintain their basic pay rate, receive full general increases if eligible, and receive within-grade increases if eligible. Following the 2-year period of grade retention, eligible employees are either placed on the pay scale of their new grade level, or are placed on pay retention. Pay retention "retains" employee's basic pay at their current rate, up to 150% of the step ten of their new grade level, whichever is lower. While on pay retention, the employee will receive no within-grade increases, and will receive only ½ of the General Increase. Eligible employees remain on pay retention until their basic pay can be set on the pay scale of their new grade level.

Q14. When entering PPP, can I register for multiple job series?

**Answer:** YES. As a minimum, employees must register for their current skill (occupational series). In Program "A", employee may register for a total of up to 5 skills, provided they are well qualified for typical positions in each selected skill. To be considered well qualified, registrants must be able to successfully perform their duties with orientation only. As a general rule, recency of experience is an important factor in the selection of skills and determination of qualifications. Minimum qualification standards may not be used for qualification determination in PPP, and qualifications may never be waived in the registration process. In Program "R" (Retained Grade Program), the registration must include the retained grade position. The pay plan for all skills in Program "R" is restricted to the pay plan of the retained grade (WG can register for WG but NOT for WL or WS). Program "R" registrants can only be registered at their retained grade.

Q15. Can NAF employees utilize the Tuition Assistance program?

**Answer:** No, NAF employees are excluded from using the Tuition Assistance program as they are not impacted by the CA study.

Q16. If a permanent career employee bumps a person in a Term Appointment, can the career person then be made permanent in that position?

**Answer:** Yes, if management has a need for that TERM position to become Permanent. The process may need to be competitive (require an announcement) depending upon the incumbent's career status, however, the process will require that the Priority Placement Program be cleared prior to filling the position as permanent.

Q17. Does exempt or non-exempt status play a role in RIF offers?

**Answer:** Exempt or non-exempt status has no impact on the RIF process.

Q18. Under Right of First Refusal (ROFR), will USAG employees (not under study), who are bumped and separated under the RIF, be considered for contractor vacancies under ROFR?

**Answer Pending – MEDCOM CA Office.** This question has been sent to MEDCOM and DA for clarification. After we receive a response, we will publish an answer.

Q19. If I decide to defer my retirement (for example, wait until age 62 to start my annuity), can I elect Federal-sponsored life and health insurance programs at that time and re-start payment of insurance premiums?

**Answer:** FEHB and FEGLI benefits terminate when a deferred retirement election is made and cannot be reinstated at the retirement eligibility date.